

Minutes of Conifer Mountain Neighbors Annual Homeowners Meeting May 2, 2026, 10 am – 11:30 am, Elk Creek Fire Station #3.

- 1. Opening Remarks** - Beth Lynn Maxwell called the meeting to order at about 10:05.
 - She announced that everyone who registers at the meeting is in a random drawing for a \$100 voucher for an Elk Creek Fire home assessment. The winner must be present to win.
 - BethLynn thanked Realtor® Cathie Nicholson for promoting the meeting in her May mass mailer postcard, and Andy Beckwith of ECFR for providing access to Station 3 for the meeting.
 - A show of hands revealed that attendees learned of the meeting through (#1) Cathie Nicholson's postcard, (#2) Facebook, (#3) the subdivision entry signs and (#4) listserves of Bonnie Biafore and Alex Winning.
- 2. History and Background.** Jamie McWhirter gave history of Conifer Mountain HOA and CMN (attached).
- 3. Treasurer's Report.** BethLynn gave the Treasurer's report on behalf of Treasurer Dave Jackson, who was out of town. There are presently 2 bank accounts: the existing Conifer Mountain Home Owners Association (CMHOA), which will be dissolved; and an account for Conifer Mountain Neighbors (CMN) which will be activated shortly. BethLynn explained the history of how the organization has assets in a CD of about \$30,000, from prior sale of community property. CMN will invest the ~\$30k into laddered CDs to enable monies to be available on a rolling basis for operating expenses.
 - BethLynn emphasized that we're open to donations as a source of operating revenue, although she did not say how to donate.
- 4. Water Cistern Update.** Alex Winning provided an update on the status of the water cistern, on Conifer Mountain Drive, between Beas and Timothys. It has been out of service for a number of years. Alex, Sarah Thompson and Dave Jackson are working with ECFD to restore the functionality of the 12,000 gallon-capacity cistern, which was installed 1990ish and paid for by the CMHOA at the time.
 - The cistern is an important asset for fire fighting on the mountain. Two tests conducted to date with ECFR have not conclusively diagnosed what is needed to make the cistern functional and maximize water access. Another test is planned; this is a work-in progress.

5. Staunton State Park Update - BethLynn welcomed Dale Specht, Park Ranger from Staunton State Park. He reported that the Park is seeing a lot of pine beetle evidence. Last year they placed 4000 pheromone packets and are monitoring the packets' impacts this year. The Park has been taking down many beetle kill trees, wrapping and using solar kill. Defensible space work with helicopter removed about 8000 trees. Due to the lack of snow this winter, the Park plans to burn slash piles next winter if snow allows. Weekends this summer will be busy so Dale recommends that locals visit Staunton during the week when possible.

- An audience member asked whether it is possible to build a trail from Conifer Mountain to access the park? Dale responded that there are currently no plans for this, as it would have to be a public access trail with a parking/trailhead, would be expensive, and there are currently no funds for this.
- In response to a question about how many trees in the park died due to beetle kill, Dale responded that he did not have a number, but that, in addition to MPB, recent severe wind events and dwarf mistletoe took out many trees. Conifer Mountain Fire Ambassador Bonnie Biafore noted that she has information about dwarf mistletoe for anyone interested. An attendee noted that CSU has pheromone packets available; a group of homeowners can organize a group purchase if desired. SPLAT is also a valid treatment. Both products are becoming increasingly scarce at this point due to consumer uptake.

NOTE: A representative from Elk Creek Fire did not attend this meeting so no update was provided to the folks in attendance.

6. Conifer Mountain Community Ambassador, Introduction and Report. Bonnie Biafore gave remarks starting at about 10:40 am. Bonnie is the Conifer Mountain Community Ambassador for Conifer Wildland Division; she is a source for reliable information and resources related to wildfire preparedness for Conifer Mountain residents. She provided her slide deck, including her contact information.

- In a show of hands regarding Elk Creek Fire home assessments, perhaps 8-10 attendees indicated that they have had them done so far. Bonnie and CMN would like to organize a "home tour" day including perhaps 2-3 volunteer homeowners on Conifer Mountain who have received their home assessment compliance certificate from Elk Creek Fire Rescue. The tour goal is to help residents see actual examples of property mitigation and home hardening done by their neighbors, that meet home assessment requirements. We will share more information on this as the summer progresses and hope to organize this for a date in late summer or fall 2026.
- Bonnie announced that she had recently secured a Community Chipping Day for Conifer Mountain, to take place on Saturday, May 23, 2026. This provides free curbside chipping for up to 20 homeowners;

- i. Note that within about 10-12 days after this meeting, all slots were filled and the requisite number of chipping volunteers signed up to assist the Wildland professionals on the chipper on May 23, 2026 Community Chipping Day.
 - Conifer Mountain's Firewise Community status lapsed in 2022. Bonnie and CMN are working together in 2026 to restore the designation for 2027. Among other things, this requires that the community document a threshold amount of contributions (community member time, in kind contributions, contributed costs/expenses) related to Firewise-recognized mitigation and education efforts. A reporting sheet is being developed by Bonnie and CMN to enable homeowners to document and submit their totals throughout the summer.
 - There was discussion around wildfire emergency evacuation routes off the Mountain. Currently, there are two options (Kennedy Gulch and Kings Valley.) Previous attempts by the CMHOA to develop a third route were not successful. CMN and Bonnie will continue to work with local agencies and property owners to explore whether another route is possible. This is complex and will be a work in progress.
 - Attendees expressed an interest in holding an emergency evacuation drill. Other communities in the area have begun doing drills, which can provide an abundance of helpful feedback and data for residents and agencies to use in evacuation planning. Bonnie is working towards a possible drill sometime in 2027; this is also complex and a work in progress.
 - **Theresa Callahan** (on Timothys Trail) won the \$100 home assessment drawing.
7. **Break-out Sessions:** BethLynn announced that those interested in any of the following topics could join a brief small-group gathering to discuss how to proceed with activity on the following topics:
- **Community Events** – Jamie McWhirt
 - **Communications** – Sarah Thompson, Alex Winning --
 - A. Jason Grieder volunteered to serve as CMN's new webmaster. Thank you, Jason.
 - B. Also, per Sarah, Dan Snyders is willing to help CMN with communications and social media. Thank you, Dan.
 - **Wildfire Education and Awareness** – Bonnie Biafore and Eileen McGinnity
 - **Grant Writing/Financial and Fundraising** – BethLynn Maxwell
8. **Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned around 11:30 am.